

TERRA COTTA.

SIR,—As my name has been mentioned in connection with Terra Cotta in your numbers of the 26th April and 5th May, and as statements were on both occasions made in reference to me without my knowledge or authority, you will, perhaps, admit a few words from me in explanation.

Your first correspondent inquires where Terra Cotta is to be obtained, and whether a church has not been built of that material near Bolton-le-moors. A note from yourself, at the foot, explains that the church at Lever Bridge was constructed from this material, and that the moulds were made under my superintendence. You also explained that the material was prepared by Mr. Fletcher of Vale Bank, who had established works at Ladyshore for the manufacture of the material, and that Mr. Sharpe would probably afford any further information that might be required. In all these statements you were quite correct, and I did not therefore, think it necessary to answer your correspondent.

Mr. Fletcher interposes, however, in your number of the 5th May, to save me all further trouble in this respect, and gives what may be looked upon as sufficiently good reasons; namely,—first, that I have no connection with his works; and secondly, that he can best answer such questions.

Now, in stating that I have no present connection with his works, Mr. Fletcher ought, in justice, to have added, that they owe their existence to me; that the application of fire-clay to architectural purposes, on a large scale, and in a highly ornamental form is, as I believe it to be, and certainly so far as he is concerned, due to me.

The church at Lever Bridge is, so far as I know, the first building constructed entirely within and without of Terra Cotta; in the rich style of the fourteenth century, in this country. The experiments which determined the committee to adopt this material were made under my superintendence, and by one of my workmen. And the design of the construction, so essentially different from that of an ordinary stone or brick building, as well as of all the ornamental details, was made by me.

And now, having claimed this much on my own account, I must at once explain, that in regard to the preparation of the material—the mixing, grinding, tempering, squeezing, drying, and burning of the clay, in fact, the whole of the potters' work—I desire to take no credit. Whatever merit the works at Ladyshore possess on account of the quality, colour, hardness, and durability of the material, belongs to Mr. Fletcher. Neither, on the other hand, do I desire to assume the responsibility which attaches to the proper execution of this department of the works in order to secure these essentials. I have satisfied myself of the excellence and durability of the material if properly treated; it rests with the manufacturer to maintain its character in these respects.

Having made this explanation, I will not trespass on your space further than to state, that I cannot subscribe to Mr. Fletcher's assertion, that works in Terra Cotta can be constructed from "Plans prepared in the ordinary manner," if by that he means it to be inferred, that a design for a stone or brick building is equally applicable to fire-clay.

It is clear, that a knowledge of the power of resistance, tenacity, porosity, and specific gravity of the material is as essential to the safe construction of buildings erected from it as a knowledge of the limits, in regard to size and form, which admit of the material being thoroughly and completely burned. It is upon these points, therefore, in designing the construction of such a building, that the skill and care of the architect, as distinguished from that of the manufacturer, has to be exercised, and upon which the safety and integrity of any such structure will depend.

I am, Sir, &c.,

EDMUND SHARPE.

Lancaster, May 14.

HACKNEY NEW CHURCH.—The foundation-stone of a new church for the extensive district of South Hackney was laid last week, in the presence of a numerous assembly of the residents of the district. The church is to be built by voluntary contributions, at a cost of upwards of 10,000*l*.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

The general exhibition of works of fine art has been already characterized in *THE BUILDER* as very satisfactory, though deficient in works of the first class. It is satisfactory, as exhibiting considerable progress on the part of the younger artists. Much has been said against the number of portraits it contains, but it should be remembered that, amongst the finest and most beautiful productions bequeathed us, the portraits of Vandyck, Holbein, Kneller, Sir Joshua, and others, hold a high station in the estimation of those who are able to appreciate such works. Pickersgill, Shee, Knight, Gordon, Herbert, and Grant have forcibly proved, in the present collection, the excellence of this branch of art. MacIise and other artists, whose works are missed in the present exhibition, are probably at work for the ensuing Government competition.

"Aurora and Zephyr" (12), W. Etty, R.A. A copy of Titian's Venus in the front figure is very palpable; the picture itself is wonderfully brilliant in colour. His picture of "Cupid interceding with Venus for Psyche" is even more excellent. No. 185, "A Flower Girl;" 186, "A Votive Offering;" and No. 259, are all beautiful specimens.

No. 13, "Amoret, Emylin, and Prince Arthur in the Cottage of Schaulder," from the "Faerie Queene," by F. R. Pickersgill; a good picture, broad and well drawn; but "The Four Ages" (362), by the same artist, is better.

Of Mr. Roberts's pictures "Jerusalem" is preferable; they are both in his best style.

"The Mole, at Ancona," with "Trajan's Arch," by Stanfield, is a very beautiful composition, true in colour, and natural in effect. There is a certain lucidity in all this artist's pictures peculiarly refreshing.

"Peasants bringing fruit into Naples" (92), by J. Uwins. This is a favourite subject of the artist, treated with his usual skill. Mr. Uwin excels in portraying Italian life.

Mr. E. Landseer's picture (141), without a name, is a beautiful work. The painting of the sheep's wool is miraculous; it seems disturbing by a breath. A solemnity, truly astonishing, pervades the picture; the very animals are engaged in prayer.

"Dressing the Bride" (127), by T. Clater. A very nice work, painted with truth; the still life is exceedingly well put in. Immediately under this is "The Favour," by J. W. Wright, another very pretty little picture, somewhat marred by the ill drawing of the arm.

144, "A Sketch," by W. Mulready, R.A. A wonderful bit of finish and colour. There is a lovely little sketch in chalk by this artist in the miniature room.

149, "Scène from Molière," by G. R. Leslie, R.A. This work has a peculiar appearance of blotchiness, but is of good conception and clever composition. A very beautiful landscape is that by W. D. Kennedy (148), nicely toned and composed.

Turner, R.A., though extravagant and obscure, stands alone in his power, and is above either praise or censure.

200, "Fetehing the Doctor," W. Collins, R.A. A humorous production; the pony is capital, the light well managed.

A nice piece of colour is No. 203, by Muller, entitled "Head of a Cingari, Xanthus."

"Dutch Boats running into Suardam, Amsterdam in the distance," by C. Stanfield, R.A. The water of this is a perfect masterpiece, transparent, clear, and effective; this picture must be welcome to all who have any idea of the beautiful.

222, From "Milton's Comus," by C. L. Eastlake, R.A. A very fine production in the highest walk of art. It is to be regretted that one head has been made to serve for the whole of the Cherubim.

The landscapes of F. R. Lee, R.A., are of great beauty. Among the best are "The Water Cart" (233), "The Market Cart" (24), and No. 43, "The Mill Ford, Devonshire."

Creswick's "Spot to be Remembered" is a perfect triumph. Others of his are very beautiful, such as "Rain on the Hills."

"The White Cockade" (244), by Farmer, is a nice picture, with his usual little fat red-checked boy.

258, "Miranda," by R. Redgrave. A clever picture, the head remarkably beautiful; still we cannot imagine this artless creature depicted by Shakespeare, but rather an actress playing the part.

A most beautiful landscape is that of Danby (272), unequalled for its intensity of warm light and shade: the effect of the rising sun behind the trees is perfectly marvellous.

The third picture from this is C. Landseer's "Eye of the Battle of Edgehill." An improvement on last year; but a monotony pervades the picture which is disagreeable.

E. M. Ward's (292) "Scene in Lord Chesterfield's Ante-room." This work, evidently of much research, full of Hogarthian feeling and humour, is an excellent picture, deserving high commendation. The heads, well studied, are characteristic of their several professions; and the whole is carried out with care and skill. We understand Mr. Vernon has bought this picture.

"Ariel," by J. Townsend. A fanciful idea, in the style of German illumination; but with too much of the manner of MacIise.

E. Frost has a fine composition, illustrative of "Sabrina borne by Water Nymphs to aged Nereus' Hall," from Comus.

327, "Burial Ground, Smyrna," W. Müller. This seems an excellent picture, but is placed so high as to defy examination, even at the risk of a broken neck.

A very good specimen of Herbert's peculiar style is "St. Gregory" (338). The monks' heads are very clever, as are some of the boys'.

Mr. Kennedy's picture of "The Two Nymphs" (347), for colour, style, and perfect keeping, cannot be too highly praised.

"Repose" (357), by A. D. Cooper, is a beautiful bit of colour, but is too close an imitation of Sir Joshua.

Mr. Webster's "Dame's School" (360), and Goodall's "Le Bon Cœur" (361), are fine specimens of finish and refinement.

Mr. Marshall Claxton's picture, "Jews lamenting over Jerusalem," can boast of much that is clever, but has a chaotic effect.

Mr. Haydon has produced a fine study of a head in 394.

"Gregory passing through the Slave Market," by J. Sant, is clever, but weak.

439, "The Bandit Mother," by W. D. Kennedy, a good picture in an excellent style. A miracle in point of finish and study is No. 471, by Mr. Lance, though the general effect is not pleasing.

Robinson Crusoe has made his re-appearance in a picture of Mr. Frazer, whereof the tone is excellent.

Mr. Middleton's "Jeanie Deans" appears deserving of better treatment than it has received.

Mr. Muller's beautiful painting, immediately under this, is remarkable for depth and solemnity of tone. We prefer it to those by the same artist already mentioned.

"The Young Squire's Wedding," by T. F. Marshall. A very nice picture, full of truth, and displaying a visible improvement on the part of this artist.

Frith's "Village Pastor" (498) is a perfect piece of truth, genuine feeling, and good drawing; it awakens sympathy and touches the heart.

A picture near it, by A. Solomon (502), has much that is good in it, but the faces are decidedly too long.

Mr. M'Jannet's (514) is an interesting picture. "Going to Pasture," by J. S. Cooper, can boast of its nicely painted cattle, but wants his accustomed warmth.

Mr. Johnson's fine work (546) will be appreciated by all; the style is broad, clean, and effective. The head of Lady Russell is not sufficiently characteristic: still this picture is one of the best in the collection.

"Connamara Girls bathing their Feet," by F. Goodall, is nicely coloured, but in parts has the fault of being horry.

Mr. Bell has succeeded in his water nymphs (552), but the figure of Ilylas is awkwardly placed. "Autolyceus," from the "Winter's Tale," by Egg, is exquisitely painted and drawn, tells its own tale, but is rather hard.

The hackneyed subject of "Boaz and Ruth" is again presented to us by Mr. Le Jeune, who makes a pretty picture of it in spite of its want of originality.

A fine picture of Mr. Eddis, under the title of "Juchebed," held a prominent situation in the exhibition.

"The origin of the Guelph and Ghibeline Quarrel," by A. Elmore, is an ambitious and clever picture, with much in it to be admired and praised, though not without faults.